



Vol. 1 Issue 7

# 38TH PARALLEL

A publication to thank, honor and remember the Korean War Veteran

KOREA50™

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*Tech. Sgt. Michael Dorsey*

Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Nels Running, Executive Director for the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration, congratulates Herb, left, Donald Greer, right, after receiving the Korea War Service Medal.

## Brothers receive medals

**ANDERSON, Calif. (MAY 5, 2001)** — For two brothers who served in the Korean War, Cinco de Mayo, the date the Mexican army defeated France at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, carries a different meaning.

Herb and Donald Greer will remember May 5 as the day they officially received the Republic of Korea Korean War Service Medal from the Department of Defense in front of 300 family and friends at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9650, here for their sacrifice 50 years ago.

"I always enjoyed coming here," said Herb, 79, a 23-year veteran who retired and lives in Little Rock, Ark. "This is something special."

Donald, 77, who traveled from Savannah, Ga., for the ceremony, agreed.

"This is like a homecoming for me," said the former pilot and retired Lieuten-

ant Colonel. "This means a lot to me. It was more than I expected. Not only because of the medal, but because of the community."

The Anderson community of Shasta County includes 98-year-old Nellie Greer. En route to the history books, their mother, not the newly-formed Air Force, called the shots.

Though the two had flown three missions together during World War II, Nellie Greer gave the thumbs up for her two sons to fly together during the Korean War. The Air Force, in its first war since it was created in 1947, was reluctant to allow family members to serve on the same crew after five brothers in the navy were lost at sea when their ship sank after an enemy submarine hit it during World War II.

Days before the ceremony here, **Continued on Page 2**



Contents in the 38<sup>th</sup> Parallel are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. Visit our website address at <http://korea50.army.mil> to learn more about Korean War veterans.

## Greer brothers from Page 1

Donald recalled how they ended up flying together.

"I went to my commander and told him that I'd volunteer (to serve in the Korean War) if I could be on the same crew with my brother," Donald said. "The commander's concern was that our parents would be upset because we were flying together. Our parents gave us their blessing."

But Donald's request was not enough to permit the brothers to fly together. The brothers petitioned the Air Force and the Air Force turned to a higher authority in Nellie Greer. She approved the request and the brothers made history. They flew 31 B-29 missions together in 1950.

"There's a feeling of security knowing that you're with family during war," Donald said.

Today, Donald and Herb's success was witnessed by family generations of past, present and future.

"I wouldn't have missed this for the world, said Donald's daughter Rhonda, who lives in Dallas, Texas. "I had to be here and haven't seen my grandmother in 15-20 years."

More than 2,600 California veter-

ans died during the war. Of that number, 15 from Shasta County died. There are 11 Medal of Honor recipients who entered service from the state.

In 1951, the Republic of Korea offered the Korean War Service Medal to United Nations forces serving in Korea and adjacent waters. At the time, however, U.S. law prohibited U.S. military personnel from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. Congress changed that ruling in 1954, but by then most U.S. service members eligible for the medal had returned home.

In 1998, to coincide with the upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War, the Republic of Korea reiterated its original offer of the Republic of Korea War Service Medal to U.S. military personnel. On Aug. 20, 1999, the Department of Defense approved the acceptance and wear of the medal. Approximately 1.8 million U.S. Korean War Veterans are eligible to receive it.

The Air Force is the lead agency for all veterans receiving the ROK Korean War Service Medal. For more information about the medal call 1-800-558-1404.

## This Date in History

**May 7, 1951:** The Air Force's 3rd Air Rescue Squadron recovered its 50th behind-the-lines downed airman.

**May 9, 1951:** Three hundred and twelve Air Force, Marine Corps and Navy planes hit Sinuiju Airfield in one of the largest air raids of the war.

**May 13, 1952:** Naval Task Force 77 began Operation INSOMNIA, a series of abbreviated night attacks.

**May 16, 1953:** Air Force Captain Manuel J. "Pete" Fernandez Jr., 4th Fighter-Interceptor Wing, became the Korean War's third ranking ace with 14.5 aerial victories.

**May 17, 1951:** The battleship *USS New Jersey* arrived off the East Coast of Korea and became the flagship of the Seventh Fleet. This was the first of two tours for the *New Jersey*.



## Watch out Indy!

The GFWC Woman's Club in Princeton, Ill., profile in their "pace car" during the town's Homestead Festival Parade in Sept. 9, 2000. The 2001 Pontiac Bonneville "pace car" is just one of the many ways commemoration partners remember, honor and thank Korean War veterans during the commemoration period that runs through Nov. 11, 2003.



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*Courtesy photo*

## Remembering our own

Korean War veterans stand in front of a Korean War Memorial in Columbia, S.C. during a ceremony May 11 near the Dorn Veterans Administration Hospital. The stone is from the Nakdong River in South Korea, a crucial boundary in the Pusan Perimeter.

## From my heart

Retired Gen. Paik, Sun Yup, who at 29, commanded the Republic of Korea Forces during the war, is shown here thanking the U.S. military aboard the USS Vella Gulf for helping his country during the Korean War. At the Korean War Air Power Symposium June 26-29 at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, the general will deliver a speech entitled "The Korean War as I Saw It."

The three-day event is designed to illuminate the role and effectiveness of airpower during the Korean War as well as the contributions of the veterans who served.



*Tech. Sgt. Michael Dorsey*

## Korean War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Upcoming Events

### May 23-30

Fleet Week, *USS John F. Kennedy*, New York City

### May 27

National Memorial Day  
Concert at The Capitol  
Washington, D.C.

### June 25-29

Pacific Air Forces  
Korean War Air Power  
Symposium,  
Hickam AFB, Hawaii

### July 23

African-American Korean  
War Commemoration,  
Arlington National Cemetery

### July 25

Twilight Tattoo for Korean  
War Veterans at the Ellipse,  
Washington, D.C.

### July 27

Korean War Armistice Day  
Commemoration,  
Washington, D.C.

United War Veterans Council  
Armistice Commemoration,  
Staten Island, N.Y.

## May is ...

### National Military Appreciation Month ...

The United Services Organization is reminding the public to participate in National Military Appreciation Month. Entering its third year of recognizing the courage heroism and sacrifice of America's service members past and present, the USO kicked off an Air and Sea Show in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., May 5-6.

The USO has entertained service members for 60 years. During the Korean War, entertainers such as Connie Stevens, Mickey Rooney, Eddie Fisher, Bob Hope, and Marilyn Monroe performed for veterans.



**Cpl. Hiroshi H. Miyamura**

### Asian Pacific-American Heritage Month

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Korean War Commemoration Committee recognizes the following Medal of Honor recipients:

**Sgt. Leroy Mendonca**

U.S. Army 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Div.

**Cpl. Hiroshi H. Miyamura**

U.S. Army—7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Div.

**PFC Herbert K. Pililaau**

U.S. Army — 23 Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Div.

## Canadian vets plan to erect monument

Canadian veterans are planning to erect a monument to pay tribute to the Canadian soldiers who were killed during the 1950-53 Korean War, the Korea Times reports.

"When 20 veterans came here last year to mark the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, they decided to do something for those who lost their lives during the war," said Vincent R. Courtenay, 67, who leads the move.

As a member of the United Nations forces, Canada committed some 22,000 soldiers, most of whom were in their late teens or early 20s, to the frontline.

According to official records, 278 of the total of 516 Canadians who perished were buried in Korea, while the remains of the rest were returned to Canada, or remain missing.

Courtenay fought against the North Koreans as a corporal during the conflict.

He has been living and working in Korea since last April, while employed as a correspondent of Ward's Autoworld, a Detroit-based monthly specializing in automobiles, aside from his efforts on behalf of his fallen countrymen.

He said, "Those Canadians are buried here in a foreign country, forgotten by the people. So it is a

veterans' responsibility to keep their memory alive."

The Canadian Veterans Association made an unsuccessful attempt to erect a monument last year because the Canadian government declined participation, saying it "does not have any responsibility" for a private monument.

The 3,000-member veterans group has decided to carry out the roughly 100-million-won project at its own expense.

Supported by the Canadian embassy, it succeeded in securing a site at the Pusan U.N. cemetery where the Canadian soldiers' graves are located.

They have collected some 80 million won so far, mostly from members' donations, and plan to hold a monument erection ceremony on Nov. 11, in observance of Canadian Veterans Day.

"When we came here half a century ago, we didn't expect anything, didn't get anything, and some now lie in the cemetery. We just want to remember them, and for them to be remembered by people forever,"

The monument is expected to generate more visits by Canadian vets and bereaved family members of the soldiers to the former battlefields. (*Courtesy United States Forces Korea*)

## Sample letter for Republic of Korean War Service Medal

HQ AFPC/DPPPRK

550 C Street W, Ste 12

Randolph AFB, TX 78150-4714

Please send me a Korean War Service Medal for my service as a member of the United States military. I served in the country of Korea, its territorial waters, or its airspace during the period June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. I have enclosed a **copy** of my DD-214, with my Social Security Number/Military Service Number/Foreign Service Number, which proves my service in Korea. I understand that the enclosed copy of my source document will not be returned. Additionally, since this is a Foreign Service award, I understand that this is a one-time issuance of the KWSM.

Please mail my Korean War Service Medal to the following address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Street address*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*City*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*State*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*zip*

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

The Air Force is the lead agent for distributing the medal. Airmen at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, are processing requests and distributing the medal to all Korean War veterans who qualify, regardless of branch of service.

AFPC is processing requests for the free medal on a first come-first served basis. After a request is processed, shipment of the medal may take up to six months.

To determine eligibility for the Korean War Service Medal, an applicant must have:

- Served during the period of hostilities, June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953;
- Been on permanent duty assignment or temporary duty for 30 consecutive or 60 nonconsecutive days; or
- Performed duty within the territorial boundaries of Korea, water adjacent to Korea or in aerial flights over Korea.

Applicants must furnish a copy of their discharge papers, the Department of Defense Form 214, as proof of eligibility. Those who need to request their military records

can download a request form at <http://www.nara.gov/regional/mpsrf180.html>, or call for an application. The form should be mailed to the National Personnel Record Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO, 63132-5000. Call (210) 565-2516 or by fax (201) 565-3118.  
(Courtesy Air Force Print News)



**The Department of Defense will honor African-American Korean War veterans at Arlington National Cemetery on July 23.**

# Air Force pilot becomes first jet ace

by Chief Master Sgt. Gary Emery  
*Air Force Print News*

**SAN ANTONIO** — Fifty years ago, May 20, 1951, a young Air Force pilot flying a hobbled fighter made history in the frigid skies over North Korea, becoming the world's first jet ace.

Capt. James Jabara was the prototypical fighter pilot, although perhaps not at first glance. Standing just 5 feet 5 inches tall, Jabara was nevertheless larger than life. Eager to enter pilot training during World War II, he endured a



self-imposed diet of 20 carrots a day to improve his eyesight and rid himself of his eye-glasses.

Jabara's strange diet succeeded.

He graduated from pilot training while still a teenager and scored 1.5 confirmed and two unconfirmed kills in more than 100 European combat missions in the P-51 Mustang. At war's end, Jabara had earned the Distinguished Flying Cross and oak leaf cluster, as well as a reputation as a perfectionist in the air.

Jabara arrived in Korea in December 1950, flying the brand-new F-86 Sabre as a member of the famed 4th Fighter Interceptor Wing -- the top-scoring American fighter unit of World War II. The 4th FIW was rushing the unproven F-86 into combat to counter the Soviet-made MiG-15, which immediately outclassed every Western warplane in the Korean theater when it had first appeared a month earlier.

Despite teething troubles with their new mounts, by April 1951, Jabara and his fellow Sabre pilots had gained the measure of the tough and maneuverable MiGs. Jabara, in particular, caught the attention of the Air Force's top brass after destroying four MiGs in April.

He was earmarked by his commanders as a top contender to become the first jet ace — the first to destroy five enemy jets in combat. When his 334<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron rotated back to Japan at the end of April, Jabara was allowed to remain behind at Suwon Air Base to fly with the sister 335<sup>th</sup> FIS, giving him one more chance to score his fifth kill before his combat tour was over.

May, 1951, however, brought frustration for the Sabre jocks of the 4th. The MiGs suddenly backed off their aggressive behavior, mostly staying on the forbidden Chinese side of the Yalu River. Aggravated U.S. pilots

could often see their North Korean, Chinese and Russian adversaries flying just out of reach in Chinese territory. Jabara's hopes for aceship were fading.

On May 20th, though, the MiGs finally came out to spar again — in quantity. Near Sinuiju in northwest Korea, Jabara and the other members of the 335<sup>th</sup> encountered 50 MiGs spoiling for a fight. Although outnumbered two to one, the American flight commander called for his pilots to drop their two underwing auxiliary fuel tanks and attack. When Jabara attempted to punch off his tanks, only one came off the wing, leaving his fighter dangerously unbalanced and sluggish.

Although procedures called for an immediate return to base in such circumstances, Jabara pressed home the attack with a head-on pass at a group of three MiGs. As the enemy fighters shot past, Jabara led his wingman in a wrenching turn to get behind the scattering MiGs. As Jabara fought his balky controls to get a bead on the MiGs twisting in front of him, his wingman spotted three more enemy fighters closing in from behind. Ignoring the new attackers for the moment, Jabara sent a long burst of fire from his F-86's six machine guns into the nearest North Korean fighter, which caught fire. Jabara followed the stricken MiG downward until the pilot ejected. Jabara had become the first jet ace, although he barely had time to think about it.

As Jabara coaxed his Sabre back up to the still-raging battle at 25,000 feet, he realized that he had lost track of his wingman, creating a situation just as dangerous as dogfighting with one wing tank. Because a wingman provided crucial cover for his leader's "six o'clock" — his tail — losing one's wingman meant a pilot was to immediately withdraw from combat and head for home.

Jabara, though, couldn't resist bouncing a group of six MiGs that flashed in front of his windscreen. Scoring hits on one, he again followed his smoking prey towards the desolate, frozen North Korean soil. As the doomed MiG spiralled down below 6,500 feet, his partners caught up with Jabara and began peppering his Sabre with cannon fire. Luckily, two American pilots heard Jabara's calls for help over the radio and were able to drive the MiGs off after a two-minute circling dogfight.

Jabara, never comfortable in the limelight, yearned to return to combat. He got his wish in early 1953 after a stateside tour as an instructor pilot. Once back in combat, Jabara took up where he left off. He ended the war with 15 MiG kills, ranking behind only Capt. Joseph McConnell, Jr. (16 kills) as the top allied ace of the Korean War.

After the war, Jabara continued his career as one of the Air Force's rising stars. Then, in 1966, while moving his family to South Carolina in preparation for a combat tour in Southeast Asia, Jabara and his daughter were killed in a traffic accident. He was 43.



# Veteran reminds nation of casualties of war

The guest speaker for the Department of Defense seventh annual National Day of Prayer breakfast was a Korean War veteran.

Former POW retired Air Force Lt. Col. Norman Duquette of Cedar Falls, Iowa accepted the Feb. 1 speaking engagement in Arlington, Va., with three objectives in mind: "To join you in prayer for our missing Americans; To thank the Defense Prisoner of War and Missing Personnel Office for their diligent efforts to date in locating our missing countrymen; to encourage you to continue in a concerted effort until all are returned home, or ac-

counted for."

Duquette shared his story with the audience so they would "better understand a very important combination of six letters of the alphabet — POW-MIA."

Shot down and captured in North Korea on Jan. 26, 1952, he was listed as missing in action until his release 587 days later.

"When I was shot down, I weighed 170 pounds," Duquette said. "I weighed in at 110 after six weeks of having been 'fatted up' by the Chinese just prior to being released. Somewhere in this 230-pounds which

you now see, is a former 90-pound prisoner of war."

He said DPMO has been tasked with an awesome responsibility, to find and return home, America's missing in action and POWs. "This is a task and responsibility, perhaps without end. But, it must be pursued nonetheless — and relentlessly," Duquette noted.

"By doing so, it demonstrates our resolve to those who serve today in our military, their country will never forsake them in a foreign land, in foreign soil." (*Courtesy Armed Forces Information Service*)

# Tensions still high after 50 years in Korea

by Master Sgt. Louis A. Arana-Barradas  
*Air Force Print News*

**OSAN AIR BASE**, South Korea — Despite the on-again, off-again talks between North and South Korea, South Korea continues to live "under the gun," said the top Air Force commander in the country.

U.S. troops based there still face a very real threat from the huge North Korean army that is ready and primed at the Demilitarized Zone, said Lt. Gen. Charles Heflebower, deputy commander of U.S. Forces Korea and 7th Air Force commander.

The North's capacity to attack the South negates any attempts that country is making diplomatically to reconcile with its neighbor, he said.

But U.S. troops based in the South "understand that and take the threat seriously," Heflebower said. "It's a threat that in many ways has not changed since the Korean War armistice, almost 50 years ago."

Since then, however, North Korea's capability to make war — to attack with little or no warning — has gone through an evolutionary improvement, he said. Today, the North's army is the world's fifth

largest, with 1.2 million troops. Most of those are along the DMZ.

President George W. Bush ordered a review of policy toward North Korea in March. That prompted the North to resume its anti-American rhetoric and also threaten to go back to a policy of confrontation and tension toward the South.

"That makes our mission here real," Heflebower said. "We don't have to invent it."

There are 37,000 U.S. troops based in South Korea. They serve side-by-side with their South Korean counterparts.

Together they create a ready and credible force that is well-trained, well-equipped and well-led, he said.

Over the years, the joint force has created an environment that tells the North a military option for reunification is not an option, Heflebower said. The force is a clear warning to the North that reconciliation or reunification will come only through political, economic or diplomatic means.

"The contribution (the troops) make to deterrence keeps the North's military option off the table," he said.

However, Heflebower said he hopes the Koreans will one day mend their relations, even reunite. Until

then, the number of U.S. troops in South Korea would stay at the present level. He does not see that figure affected by concerns over the military's operations tempo.

There has not been a change in that environment in 50 years. The only change has been in the North's intent to seek an accord with the South. But there has to be more than willingness on the North's part to talk about change, said Heflebower.



(U.S. Air Force photo)

Republic of Korea Forces still stand guard at the Demilitarized Zone 50 years after the war to stop communism.

# HONOR ROLL

## **John Kelvin Koelsch**

**Rank:** Lieutenant (j.g.)

**Organization:** U.S. Navy, Navy helicopter rescue unit.

**Place and date:** North Korea, July 3, 1951.

**Entered service at:** Los Angeles, Calif.

**Birth:** London, England.



**Citation:** For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with a Navy helicopter rescue unit. Although darkness was rapidly approaching when information was received that a Marine aviator had been shot down and was trapped by the enemy in mountainous terrain deep in hostile territory, Lieutenant. (j.g.) Koelsch voluntarily flew a helicopter to the reported position of the downed airman in an attempt to effect a rescue. With an almost solid overcast concealing everything below the mountain peaks, he descended in his unarmed and vulnerable aircraft without the accompanying fighter escort to an extremely low altitude beneath the cloud level and began a systematic search. Despite the increasingly intense enemy fire, which struck his helicopter on one occasion, he persisted in his mission until he succeeded in locating the downed pilot, who was suffering from serious burns on the arms and legs. While the victim was being hoisted into the aircraft, it was struck again by an accurate burst of hostile fire and crashed on the side of the mountain. Quickly extricating his crewmen and the aviator from the wreckage, Lt. (j.g.) Koelsch led them from the vicinity in an effort to escape from hostile troops, evading the enemy forces for nine days and rendering such medical attention as possible to his severely burned companion until all were captured. Up to the time of his death while still a captive of the enemy, Lt. (j.g.) Koelsch steadfastly refused to aid his captors in any manner and served to inspire his fellow prisoners by his fortitude and consideration for others. His great personal valor and heroic spirit of self-sacrifice throughout sustain and enhance the finest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

